

Application no. 10/798,204
Amendment dated: October 11, 2005
Reply to office action dated: August 11, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the application. By this paper, claims 10 and 11 have been amended. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-19 in light of the amendments and remarks herein are respectfully requested.

A. Claim Amendments

Applicants have amended claim 10 to stipulate that "the outer edges of said upper and lower sections of said laminate sheet are aligned so as to together define the outer edges of said laminate sheet". Similarly, claim 11 has been amended to stipulate that "the outer edges of said partial hard core sheet, except for the outer edge thereof juxtaposed with said flexible sheet, are aligned with the corresponding outer edges of said upper and lower sections of said laminate sheet". No new matter is added by these amendments which find support throughout the application and drawings as filed.

B. 35 USC 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and 8-15, and 18-19 under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Wesselink (U.S. Patent No. 6,213,702) and, in doing so, was not persuaded by applicants' arguments filed 5/23/2005 because the claim language was considered to include Wesselink. Applicants respectfully submit that this objection has been overcome by the present amendments and request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the same.

Applicants have amended independent claim 10 as aforesaid so as to patentably distinguish Wesselink. Amended claim 10 cannot be construed to read upon Wesselink as Wesselink's strip (8) cannot be the upper (or lower) hard core section of the laminate sheet defined by claim 10. Moreover, by this amendment, it is clear that Wesselink's need for a separate joining strip (8) (i.e. being separate from the laminate sheet (1)), to mechanically affix a flexible sheet (band 2) to the laminate sheet (1), is eliminated by

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the claimed invention which, instead, does so by means of the lamination of the hard cores layers which constitute the laminate sheet itself.

For all of the reasons stated in applicants' submission of 5/23/2005, applicants' claimed method and laminate sheet are markedly different from Wesselink and the other cited prior art, and provide substantial improvements there over.

C. 35 USC § 103

The Examiner also rejected claims 7 and 16-17 under 35 USC 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Wesselink as applied to claims 1 and 10 and further in view of Akao (U.S. Patent No. 4,661,395) or Fitch (U.S. Patent No. 3,301,295).

By reason of the present amendments, and for the same reasons set out in applicants' submissions of 5/23/2005, applicants submit that Wesselink is substantially dissimilar to the subject matter of the present claims and neither anticipates nor renders obvious that subject matter in view of either of Akao and Fitch.

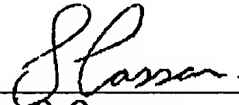
Conclusions

For the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that the cited references do not anticipate or render obvious the subject matter of any of the present claims (as amended herein) and this is true, whether the reference is considered alone or in combination with other prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections is respectfully requested.

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With this response, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance.
Should the examiner deem a telephone conference to be of assistance in advancing the application to allowance, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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